Braille Exploration

Braille is a code that lets you read and write language through touch. If you are already a Braille expert, cheer on your sighted friends!

Kit contains:

- Braille Key
- 2 Braille Sheets
- 1 Push Pin

You will need: scratch paper and pencil, scissors, tape, and ruler.

MORTON GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY
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Youth Info Desk: 847-929-5102 | mgpl.org

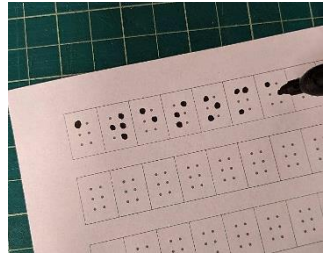
Braille is read with the fingertips and uses a system of six raised dots to encode letters, numbers, and symbols. It is a valuable literacy tool used around the world by people who are blind. The system was created in 1821 by an 11-year-old Louis Braille, who was inspired by the “night writing” developed for Napoleon’s French army.

INSTRUCTIONS

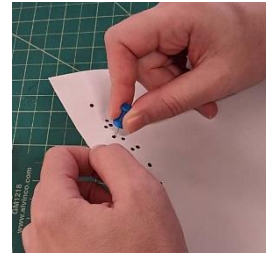
Step 1. Think of a message you’d like to send to a friend.

Step 2. Read through your Braille Key to learn how to encode the letters and symbols into 2 x 3 “cells” of dots.

Step 3. Use a marker to create the characters of your message on a blank Braille sheet, cell by cell, from left to right. Be sure to leave a blank cell between words.

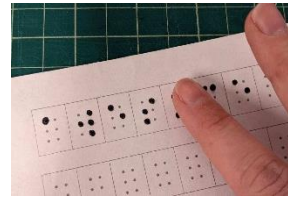


Step 4. Flip your paper over. Use the push pin to poke a tiny hole in the center of each marked dot in your message. (Your marker dots should be visible from the back.)



Step 5. Test. Flip your paper over and feel the raised bumps on each cell. Can you tell what characters they represent?

Step 6. Give your message and the Braille Key to a buddy to read. First try reading by touch only. Look at the marker dots as needed. How did you do?



Watch library employee Sarah Cranston from the Iowa Department for the Blind create Braille books for her patrons: https://youtu.be/yJL9Wol7URg

Project adapted from:
https://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/brain/read-with-your-fingers2/activity-instructions

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

There is a lot of cool tech invented to assist people who are blind or have low vision access information. However, there's still work to do to make tech affordable and easy to use. Examples:

Screen readers are software programs designed to take the text on a computer screen and either read it out loud or translate it to a Braille display.

Refreshable Braille displays provide access to electronic information through a tactile computer interface that electronically raises and lowers different combinations of pins in Braille cells as the user reads.

At the library, you can find books printed in Braille through the online catalog with the subject heading "Braille books."

American Foundation for the Blind: afb.org
Braille Institute: brailleinstitute.org